

Fall 2015

Biography of Jim Nelson

James Nelson

Evan Barrett

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Jim Nelson Bio

Jim Nelson served as a Justice on the Montana Supreme Court from May 1993 until January 2013. He obtained his Bachelor's degree in business from the University of Idaho in 1966 and his Juris Doctor degree, cum laude, from George Washington University in 1974. Prior to serving on the Court, Jim engaged in the general practice of law in Cut Bank, Montana for nearly 20 years, representing individuals, small businesses, ranchers and farmers in domestic relations, real estate, litigation, contract, wills probate, estate and oil and gas matters. Additionally, he served as the Glacier County Attorney for 14 of those years. He was active in numerous community affairs and organizations and served the State of Montana in various capacities including as a member and chairman of the State Board of Oil and Gas Conservation and as a member of the State Gaming Advisory Council and the Governor's Advisory Council on Corrections and Criminal Justice Policy. While on the Supreme Court Jim served on a number of Commissions including chairing the Court's Commission on Technology and acting as liaison to the Commission on Courts of Limited Jurisdiction. Jim was a member of the State Bar of Montana CLE Institute and one of Montana's Commissioners on the Uniform Laws Commission. He presently serves as a member of the Board of Directors and as a member of the legal advisory committee of Free Speech for People.org. Jim taught as an adjunct professor at the University Of Montana School Of Law in 2000 and in 2013. He is the recipient of the Montana Trial Lawyers Public Service Award, 2013; the Montana American Civil Liberties Janette Rankin Award, 2013; and the American Bar Association Stonewall Award, 2014. He is a veteran, having served as an officer in the United States Army. Jim and his wife, Chari, have been married for over 45 years and have two grown children and four grandchildren.